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THEATER AIR MOBILITY:
HISTORICAL ANALYSIS, DOCTRINE AND LEADERSHIP

by

Ted E. "Gene" Carter, Jr., Major, USAF

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Advisor: Major Courtney Holmberg

Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama

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Air Command and Staff College
Maxwell AFB, AL 36112

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Preface

This research project started with a simple phone call in November 1998. I remember it like it was yesterday. Colonel (now Brigadier General) Bishop had been selected as the Director of Mobility Forces (DIRMOBFOR) for Operation PHOENIX CEDAR. He and his staff needed to be on the next available flight to Ramstein Air Base, Germany. Yes, I was on his staff. I had attended the Air Mobility Warfare Center's DIRMOBFOR briefings, and I read the numerous pamphlets and books, but nothing could prepare me for what happened when I got to Germany. That is when the idea for this project came to mind. After spending a couple of months in Germany supporting the airlift operations to the Middle East, I experienced the doctrinal problems facing command and control of airlift operations first-hand. I also concluded that doctrine is only guidance on how you *should* or may want to do something. When a real-world situation arises, doctrine or no doctrine, you must be flexible enough to make the mission a success. This research has made me more familiar with what doctrine says you *should* do, but many of my questions were left unanswered.

I would like to thank Colonel John Brower for his "my door is always open" policy to answer my questions. I am deeply thankful for his guidance. I am also thankful to Major Pete Hirneise for his patience in explaining all this doctrine stuff to me. I would like to thank Brigadier General Rod Bishop for giving me a priceless educational experience as a member of his DIRMOBFOR staff, and Lieutenant General Edwin Tenoso (Ret) for his insightful guidance and information. Most of all I want to thank my faculty research advisor, Major Courtney

Holmberg, for his time and patience in dealing with my research project when new data became available late in the process. If I had not been able make many extreme last minute changes to my research, this paper may have been outdated before I turned it in.

Lastly I want to thank my wife Cathy, my son John, and daughter Katie Beth for putting up with me while I spent time in the books and late nights at the computer to get this research done. Their smiling faces and unconditional love kept me going.

Abstract

This document is an assessment of theater air mobility history, doctrine, and leadership. The document analyzes current theater air mobility organization and command and control (C2) for supporting Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) and multiple Joint Task Force (JTF) scenarios.

A problem lies in the fact that current Air Force and air mobility doctrine establishes C2 with the Joint Forces Air Component Commander (JFACC) instead of with the Director of Mobility Forces (DIRMOBFOR) who oversees theater air mobility operations. During Operation ALLIED FORCE, this lack of C2 at the air mobility level created a coordination nightmare for the DIRMOBFOR as every mission (not sortie) had to be coordinated for validation with numerous commands and organizations until tactical control (TACON) of air mobility assets was delegated by the JFACC.

This document employed support from three areas. First, historical data from WW II to the Gulf War was examined to provide background information on how the air mobility C2 structure formed from WW II into what it is today. Second, current Air Force and air mobility doctrine documents were analyzed to determine how well they reflected the vision of national strategy documents and joint publications regarding MOOTW and multiple JTF scenarios. Finally, an assessment of theater leadership compared the similarities and differences between the Commander of Airlift Forces (COMALF), who commanded airlift forces, and today's

DIRMOBFOR, who only has coordinating authority, yet is tasked to manage both theater airlift and air refueling assets.

Recommendations are made to create a Commander of Mobility Forces, or COMMOBFOR, to enable the efficient and effective exercise of command and control over air mobility forces at the theater level. The COMMOBFOR would have direct coordination with Air Mobility Command (AMC) and exercise OPCON and/or TACON of transiting intertheater air mobility assets. Under command of the JFACC, the COMMOBFOR would inherit OPCON and/or TACON of intratheater air mobility assets, and may have multiple deputy COMMOBFORs to assist with the deployment, employment, sustainment, and redeployment of contingency forces.

The single most valuable asset of the COMMOBFOR will be command authority which allows centralized command and control. Because of this, air mobility will be able to support future MOOTW operations and multiple JTF scenarios anticipated by the national security strategy and joint publications.

Part 1

Introduction

We made this train. Why are we making it so hard to drive?

— Maj Ted E. “Gene” Carter, Jr.

In April 1992, Air Force Chief of Staff General (Gen) Merrill A. McPeak initiated a major infrastructure reorganization effort within the U.S. Air Force. When he was finished, the entire in-theater air mobility command and control (C2) structure and organization had changed. These changes were not drastically new. The changes are similar to that of the airlift C2 structure during WW II, Korea, and Vietnam. These old but new changes were specifically felt in the application of new Air Force and air mobility doctrine as well as in the new air mobility leadership during contingency operations. Gone were the days of the Commander of Airlift Forces (COMALF) who exercised command authority of airlift forces.¹ Enter the Director of Mobility Forces (DIRMOBFOR), who is tasked to carry air mobility into the future armed with “coordination authority” but with no command authority.²

With the end of the Cold War, national security strategy documents and joint publications assert that most military operations today, and especially those in the future, are likely to be Military Operations Other than War (MOOTW) with multiple simultaneous Joint Task Forces (JTF) rather than a single major theater war (MTW). Because of this, air mobility forces require a centralized command and control structure at the theater air mobility level versus at the air component commander, or Joint Force Air Component Commander (JFACC) level. Herein is

where the problem lies. Current Air Force and air mobility doctrine establishes C2 with the JFACC instead of the DIRMObFOR who oversees theater air mobility operations. During Operation ALLIED FORCE, this lack of C2 at the air mobility level created a coordination nightmare for the DIRMObFOR as every mission (not sortie) had to be coordinated for validation with numerous commands and organizations until tactical control (TACON) of air mobility assets was delegated by the JFACC. If the national strategy is correct in predicting future MOOTW, the DIRMObFOR may be in charge of multiple issues for multiple JTFs. Trying to support these multiple task forces by coordinating each mission may lead to a break down in coordination causing some missions to fail.

One possible response to prevent the potential failure of air mobility missions is to move command authority back down to the DIRMObFOR at the theater air mobility level. Since a commander is the only person who has the authority to control forces through either operational control (OPCON) or tactical control (TACON),³ the DIRMObFOR should be replaced by a Commander of Air Mobility Forces (COMMOBFOR). With command authority at the theater air mobility level, the COMMOBFOR would have authority to efficiently and effectively execute missions, instead of coordinating each one.

To support the establishment of a COMMOBFOR, this document employed a three-pronged approach. First, historical data from WW II to the Gulf War was examined to provide background information on how the air mobility C2 structure evolved into what it is today. Second, current Air Force and air mobility doctrine was analyzed to determine how well they reflect the vision of national security strategy documents and joint publications regarding MOOTW and multiple JTF scenarios. Finally, a theater leadership assessment examined the similarities and differences of the Commander of Airlift Forces (COMALF), who commanded

airlift forces, and today's DIRMOBFOR, who only has coordinating authority, yet is tasked to manage both theater airlift and air refueling assets.

Recommendations are made to create a COMMOBFOR to enable the efficient and effective exercise of command and control over air mobility forces at the theater level. The COMMOBFOR would have direct coordination with Air Mobility Command (AMC) and exercise OPCON and/or TACON of transiting intertheater air mobility assets. Under command of the JFACC, the COMMOBFOR would inherit OPCON and/or TACON of intratheater air mobility assets, and may have multiple deputy COMMOBFORs to assist with the deployment, employment, sustainment, and redeployment of contingency forces. Finally, the peacetime commander of the Air Mobility Operations Control Center (AMOCC) is recommended as the most viable candidate for the COMMOBFOR position.

To support recommendations for a COMMOBFOR, Part 2 of this document will examine the historical foundations of how air mobility C2 was formed during WW II, and how command and control began to change during the Vietnam War, culminating with the success of Operation DESERT STORM. Part 3 will raise questions concerning the doctrinal aspects of air mobility operations by assessing the past command authority of a COMALF versus today's DIRMOBFOR. Part 4 will compare the DIRMOBFOR and the COMALF by examining their similarities and differences in reference to eight functional roles. Finally, based on this information, Part 5 will discuss the best role for air mobility leadership by examining qualities that set the command role of a COMMOBFOR apart from the coordination role which rests with the DIRMOBFOR.

Notes

¹ Major Gregory M. Chase, *Wings for Lift: A Guide to Theater Airlift Control*, Research Report no. M-U 43122 C487w (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, April, 1985), 11.

² Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 2, *Organization and Employment of Aerospace Power*, 28 September 1998, 58.

³ Brig Gen Rod Bishop, Operation ALLIED FORCE Director of Mobility Forces, interviewed by author, 9 February 2000.

Part 2

Historical Foundations

Let it be admitted that the modern technological revolution has confronted us with military problems of unprecedented complexity, problems made all the more difficult because of the social and political turbulence of the age in which we live. But precisely because of these revolutionary developments, let me suggest that you had better study military history, indeed all history, as no generation of military men have studied it before.

— Frank Craven

Rapid Global Mobility operations require a seamless infrastructure to support future conflicts, humanitarian needs, and natural or manmade disasters. To better understand the air mobility forces infrastructure we have today, one need only to look back to airlift history and examine the command and control of strategic and theater airlift operations during World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf War.¹

War World II

At the beginning of World War II, transport planes served in the Air Corps Ferrying Command from May 30, 1941 to March 9, 1942 under the direct command of the Chief of the Air Corp, Major General George H. Brett.² As U.S. involvement in World War II kicked off, many of the airlift support missions that were flown were not coordinated between the Army air transport operations and the Navy, which resulted in wasted airframes and missions. Often two

aircraft would fly different cargo from the same location to the same destination when one aircraft could have carried both loads.³

In March 1942, Gen Henry H. "Hap" Arnold, the new Commanding General of the Army Air Forces (AAF), wanted to centralize air mobility operations to bring some form of order to the situation. To do this, he established a single Air Transport Command (ATC) and broke it down into two divisions. The Ferrying Division delivered aircraft and transported personnel while the Air Transport Division delivered supplies and equipment from CONUS to the theaters.⁴ This type of airlift is known as intertheater, or strategic airlift because it flies from one theater to another theater. Gen Arnold also wanted to keep theater airlift operations centralized, so he assigned troop carrier units to the AAF commander within a theater. This provided a means of transportation for combat troops, both airborne and infantry, and glider units, and supported the theater commander by providing him with dedicated airlift within his theater.⁵ This type of airlift is called intratheater, or theater airlift because it flies within the Air Force commander's theater. Gen Arnold made command and control of these strategic and theater airlift forces easy. He appointed himself commander of the ATC strategic forces and put the AAF theater commanders in charge of the theater airlift forces within their theaters. His goal...centralized command and control.⁶

In March 1944, Headquarters Army Air Forces directed the Army Air Forces Board to analyze airlift operations to ensure their efficiency. The Army Air Forces Board concluded that a single commander could best meet the needs for strategic as well as theater airlift operations. The commander for strategic operations would be the Commanding General of the Army Air Forces, and the commander for theater operations would be the theater Air Force commander

who had his own airlift assets and could be augmented as required. By affirming Gen Arnold's in-place infrastructure, the board cemented the foundation for our current airlift structure.⁷

Post World War II

In 1948, President Truman issued Executive Order 9877 as part of the postwar reorganization to eliminate duplication within the services. He ordered the naval airlift transport assets and the ATC to merge. This order led to the birth of the Military Air Transport Service (MATS). All CONUS based airlift assets were now under the single command of MATS. However, this reorganization did not include theater airlift assets. They remained under the command of the theater commander.⁸ Although MATS was established, there was no change in the command and control structure for strategic assets and theater assets.

The Korean War

The C2 structure for airlift during the Korean War was the same as that during World War II. MATS maintained control, operation, and administrative support of strategic operations by moving personnel, supplies, and equipment from the United States to Japan where theater airlift took over. The theater Air Force commander was in charge of theater airlift operations. Theater operations eventually fell under the control of the 315th Air Division, commanded by Major General William Tunner. As the theater airlift commander, it was his vision that airlift could perform any mission as long as it was centrally manned and under the command of the theater air commander. After the war, the Far East Air Forces report stated that "the assignment of both the troop carrier and transport tasks to a single airlift commander was successful in that it provided maximum efficiency and effectiveness in the utilization of the theater Air Force airlift resources."⁹ Almost 10 years after the Army Air Forces Board results, The Far East Air Forces

report on the Korean War also recommended two separate command structures for strategic and theater forces. MATS would continue operating strategic operations while theater commanders controlled their own airlift operations within their theater.¹⁰

Pre Vietnam War

Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara, under the emerging "Flexible Response" strategy, examined the command and control of strategic and theater (troop carrier) military airlift. McNamara testified before a special House Subcommittee on "National Military Airlift," chaired by U.S. Representative Carl Vinson, that

"...distinctions made between troop carrier and strategic airlift operations, which were based upon aircraft capabilities, would no longer be significant with the acquisition of the C-130Es and C-141s...and...it might prove entirely feasible to load troops and their equipment in the United States and fly them directly to the battle area overseas, instead of moving them by strategic airlift to an overseas assembly point and then loading them and their equipment on troop carriers...This might require some changes in organization."¹¹

Secretary McNamara directed a review of the MATS organizational structure. He wanted to examine the effects the new C-130s and C-141s would have on the strategic and theater airlift infrastructure, operations, costs considerations, and the need to support theater commanders. Representative Vinson was also curious because he too feared duplication of effort and the costs associated with separate strategic and theater command structures. To him, the difference between strategic and theater airlift operations were not well defined. Although Air Force Chief of Staff, Gen Curtis E. LeMay, disagreed with McNamara and Vinson, he ordered MATS to develop a plan for the possible implementation of McNamara's proposal that would place strategic and theater airlift forces under a single commander and a single command.¹² That command became the Military Airlift Command.

The Vietnam War

In January 1966, MATS was redesigned as the Military Airlift Command (MAC) and maintained command of all strategic airlift forces. As the Vietnam War began, strategic airlift drew upon doctrine from AFM 1-9 *Theater Airlift Operations*, which underscored that theater airlift forces should remain under the command of the theater commander.¹³ As the war progressed, there were numerous growing pains. For starters, the Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) 315th Air Division managed theater airlift from outside the theater in Tachikawa, Japan. This was a poor arrangement for communications and, effectively, decentralized command and control of theater airlift forces at that time. On October 15, 1966, the 834th Air Division was set in motion in country at Tan Son Nhut to control all theater airlift operations¹⁴ while the 315th Air Division coordinated strategic airlift operations with MAC. The theater requirements grew to a point that the strategic MAC crews staged out of Tan Son Nhut in order to expedite the movement of troops and equipment as close as possible to the front lines. At this point, the gray area between where strategic missions ended and theater missions began proved inefficient and complicated the airlift mission. Because of this, "...in MAC's view, the optimum arrangement for airlift activities was single managership."¹⁵ The time had come to integrate the strategic and theater airlift forces under one command.

Because of the same airlift characteristics and overlapping missions, it was hard to determine when strategic airlift ended and theater airlift began. As a result, the Air Force directed Lindsay Report stated, "duplication and/or overlap of the responsibilities and functions occurred in aerial ports, airlift control elements...In this case, there were two airlift forces with similar capabilities performing within and between an area command."¹⁶ The report recommended the Air Force combine all airlift assets under one command. Finally, MAC made

the recommendation to combine all airlift operations under one command structure to simplify the C2 process and provide a seamless operation between strategic and theater operations. The need for a separate theater C2 within the theater, however, remained in place.

Post Vietnam War

In addition to the Lindsay Report and MAC's recommendation to combine strategic and theater airlift operations, the 1969 Project Corona Harvest report also recommended "All USAF airlift resources should be consolidated under a single organization for airlift." In July 1974, Secretary of Defense (Sec Def) James R. Schlesinger finally directed the merger of strategic and theater assets under the single command structure of MAC and designated MAC a specified command. "In 1974, Headquarters USAF designated MAC as the single manager for airlift and in December 1974 all USAF strategic and theater airlift resources were consolidated under MAC."¹⁷

The Gulf War

Much like Vietnam, the Gulf War proved the flexibility, versatility and significance of having strategic and theater airlift forces combined under the single command of MAC. As in Vietnam, the strategic operations remained with MAC, but the COMALF, acting on behalf of the MAC commander, "monitored and managed" strategic airlift forces that came into or out of the theater. While MAC delegated command responsibilities for theater operations to the theater Commander in Chief (CINC), in this case the Commander in Chief Central Command, or CINCCENTCOM, CINCCENTCOM then delegated control to the JFACC who passed it on to the COMALF. The command authority vested in the COMALF was very important. Brigadier General (Brig Gen) Frederick Buckingham, who served as the first COMALF during the Gulf

War, said it best that as the theater point of contact for all airlift operations, "Anything that smells, or kinda looks like airlift, they come directly to you. They don't think about the chain of command." Then Brig Gen Edwin Tenoso, the second COMALF, also believed his responsibility was to link up with the users to ensure their airlift needs were met. "These Gulf War COMALF experiences reinforced the need for an in-theater airlift commander to justify basing and resources, interface with the strategic airlift system, and ensure the readiness of the airlift force."¹⁸

This historical analysis provided a background on how air ability command and control was formed during WW II and how command and control began to change during the Vietnam War. During the Vietnam War, an airlift commander within the theater proved to be a solid link ensuring the efficient and effective use of airlift. Although under a single command, the theater commander carried over to the Gulf War in the form of a COMALF. The primary purposes of the COMALF were to integrate strategic and theater airlift and attend to the caring and feeding of the airlift troops. The April 1992 change reorganized the Air Force and airlift organizational structure. These changes also affected the application of Air Force and air mobility doctrine. To understand these new changes, the next part will discuss doctrinal implications for the future of air mobility operations.

Notes

¹ Betty R. Kennedy, *Air Mobility En Route Structure: The Historical Perspective, 1941-1991* (Scott AFB, IL.: Headquarters Air Mobility Command Office of History, September 1993), 1.

² Herman S. Wolk, *The Struggle for Air Force Independence, 1943-1947* (Washington, DC.: Air Force History and Museums Program, 1997), 320-321.

³ Kennedy, 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵ *Anything, Anywhere, Anytime: An Illustrated History of the Military Airlift Command, 1941-1991* (Scott AFB, IL.: Headquarters Air Mobility Command Office of History, May 1991), 21.

Notes

⁶ Kennedy, 5.

⁷ Ibid., 3-6.

⁸ Ibid., 9

⁹ Ibid., 11-15.

¹⁰ Ibid., 16-17

¹¹ Ibid., 19-20

¹² Ibid., 20-21

¹³ Lt Col Richard T. Devereaux, *Theater Airlift Management and Control—Should We Turn back The Clock to be Ready for Tomorrow?*, (Maxwell AFB, AL.: Air University Press, School of Advanced Airpower Studies Thesis, September 1994), 7.

¹⁴ Ibid., 8-9.

¹⁵ Kennedy, 24.

¹⁶ Ibid., 24.

¹⁷ Maj David C. Underwood, *The Airlift Lessons of Vietnam—Did We Really Learn Them?*, Research Report no. M-U 43122 U56a (Maxwell AFB, AL.: Air University Press, May 1981), 7.

¹⁸ Devereaux, 26-27.

Part 3

Doctrine

It seems very queer that we invariably entrust the writing of our regulations for the next war to men totally devoid of anything but theoretical knowledge..

— Lt Gen George S. Patton, Jr.

Sir Richard Burton once quoted an old proverb that said, "Peace is the dream of the wise; war is the history of man."¹ Today's U.S. military is an important tool used by the U.S. government to shape the global security environment. However, that shaping is not as much through peace and war as it is through MOOTW. Like the name suggests, MOOTW are operations that involve using military capabilities in a variety of situations or circumstances that ordinarily would not be considered wartime operations.² These operations vary widely from humanitarian assistance and natural disaster response to armed conflict. On one end of the spectrum, Operation ATLAS RESPONSE is currently delivering humanitarian supplies to flood-ravaged Mozambique. On the other end, during JTF Noble Anvil, the air war portion of Operation ALLIED FORCE, U.S. and NATO forces used airpower to force Slobodan Milosevic to cease aggression in Kosovo. For the first time in history, an armed conflict was conducted exclusively with airpower. U.S. and NATO forces flew over 38,000 sorties in 78 days.³ Both of these operations are considered MOOTW. Today, one cannot pick up a newspaper without reading about the trend of military operations supporting MOOTW rather than MTW. Because

this trend is continuing, Air Force and air mobility doctrine need to address a number of concerns that are specific to MOOTW.

Air Force Doctrine

The National Security Strategy, the National Military Strategy, and numerous Joint Publications, such as Joint Pub 3-07, *Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War*, address the current global and political situation and how U.S. military assets will be used more in the role of MOOTW rather than in a MTW. For example, the *National Security Strategy For A New Century* states,

“...the United States must be prepared to respond to the full range of threats to our interests abroad. Smaller scale contingency operations encompass the full range of military operations short of major theater warfare, including humanitarian assistance, peace operations,...and reinforcing key allies. These operations will likely...require significant commitments over time”⁴

Regarding the full spectrum of crises, the National Military Strategy says, “The United States military will be called upon to respond to crises across the full range of military operations, from humanitarian assistance...and...smaller-scale contingencies. We must also be prepared to conduct several smaller-scale contingency operations at the same time...”⁵

Joint Pub 3-07 discusses the principles, types, and planning for MOOTW. In contrast, the only Air Force doctrine that addresses MOOTW is Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 1. According to AFDD 1,

“The challenges our armed forces face today are more ambiguous and regionally focused than during the Cold War. The challenges can no longer be described as a single threat (the Soviet Union) but as *multiple risks*: economic and political transitions...the spread of weapons of mass destruction...ethnic and religious conflict, refugee overflows,...and terrorism.”⁶

AFDD 2, *Organization and Employment of Aerospace Power*, outlines the essentials of “...organization and employment of Air Force air, space, and information capabilities to

accomplish the missions assigned by...CINCs.”⁷ AFDD 2-6, *Air Mobility Operations*, describes “...mobility organizations, command relationships, and operational elements to include airlift, air refueling, and air mobility support assets,” as well as how those forces should be employed.⁸ AFDD 2 and AFDD 2-6 both provide excellent guidance in support of a *single* JTF, but they do not address the issues of MOOTW. In addition, AFDD 2-6 does not address the complexity of the role of the DIRMObFOR in support of MOOTW, as was encountered during the many JTFs of Operation ALLIED FORCE, or support for the possible multiple risks listed in AFDD 1 above.

Air Mobility Doctrine

After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War, the U.S. military, and in particular, the U.S. Air Force, went through a tremendous reduction in the number of personnel on active duty. In response to these pressures, Air Force Chief of Staff, Gen McPeak, merged control of air refueling forces and airlift forces under the newly created AMC in 1992. Contingency coordination responsibilities for air refueling and airlift fell under the guidance of the newly created DIRMObFOR. According to AFDD 2-6, the DIRMObFOR is the “...designated coordinating authority for air mobility with all commands and agencies both *internal* and *external* to the joint force. The DIRMObFOR is responsible for integrating the *total* air mobility effort...”⁹ In reality, the DIRMObFOR’s predecessor, the COMALF, had always been a dual-hatted role in that it coordinated strategic and theater airlift. According to Lieutenant General (Lt Gen) Edwin E. Tenoso, USAF Retired, who served as the COMALF during Operation DESERT STORM, “The DIRMObFOR has now become a huge dual-role job.”¹⁰

Doctrinal Questions and Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW)

As mentioned previously, national security strategy documents and joint publications indicate that most military operations today, and especially tomorrow, are likely to be MOOTW. Because of this, Air Force doctrine should consider possible scenarios across the full spectrum of conflict rather than focusing on operations supporting a single JTF. Air mobility doctrine needs to address issues such as multiple MOOTW scenarios occurring simultaneously and what should happen if these MOOTW are in the same theater but in different areas of responsibility (AORs) not associated with an air operation center (AOC). This scenario actually occurred during Operation ALLIED FORCE when the DIRMObFOR, Colonel (now Brigadier General) Rod Bishop, was working seven different JTFs supporting Operation ALLIED FORCE, but had nothing to do with JTF Noble Anvil, the air war portion of ALLIED FORCE.¹¹ Brig Gen Bishop was coordinating air mobility issues for the humanitarian relief efforts of JTF SHINING HOPE and the deployment of U.S. Army helicopters for TF HAWK, just to name a few. This situation brought two substantial flaws in current doctrine to light. How can (or should) the DIRMObFOR operate out of an AOC that, first does not have sufficient support, specifically communications support, for the DIRMObFOR to work the other JTF issues,¹² and second has little or no support from the Joint Force Air Component Commander (JFACC) who only cares about bombs on target and air refueling support for the fighters in his own AOR.¹³

Questions have also surfaced about the feasibility of providing a DIRMObFOR for each JTF. While there would be no problem with one person having visibility over the JTF, the existence of multiple JTF DIRMObFORs would cause competition for limited theater airlift resources and would most likely hinder any of the DIRMObFOR's efforts to execute centralized command and control over mobility issues.

AFDD 2-6 says the DIRMObFOR is the tanker expert and should stay in the AOC.¹⁴ Frankly, it is difficult to imagine how Brig Gen Bishop could have followed the AFDD 2-6 guidance and worked refueling issues from the AOC in Vicenza, Italy, when he received the best support to coordinate the seven JTF issues out of Ramstein AB, Germany. This leads to the question of where should the tanker expertise reside within the AOC? Should that expertise remain in the air mobility division (AMD) or pour over to the operations division of the AOC during the employment and sustainment phases of the operation?

Finally, are there too many tasks assigned to the DIRMObFOR? In a multiple MOOTW scenario or even a MTW scenario, the DIRMObFOR could really get bogged down trying to perform the dual-role job of directing both airlift and tanker operations. Speaking of the current DIRMObFOR position, Lt Gen Tenoso said, "I could not have possibly done that job during Desert Storm if I had to worry about tankers. Brig Gen Caruana was responsible for all tankers in theater and I was responsible for all the airlift in theater. So, you had two brigadier generals with two full-time jobs, and now supposedly it is assumed under a single DIRMObFOR?"¹⁵ Perhaps doctrine should designate a deputy with air refueling expertise so the DIRMObFOR could "direct" all mobility issues and the deputy could work air refueling issues and airlift issues from the AOC. Are there other possible options?

This section raised numerous questions while providing only minimal answers concerning the doctrinal aspect of air mobility operations. The point is clear, however. Current air mobility doctrine is insufficient to answer these questions. These and other doctrinal issues need to be studied more thoroughly. Because of the increased importance of MOOTW and the potential overburdening of the DIRMObFOR during a MTW, or multiple JTF scenarios, Air Force doctrine writers should reassess air mobility doctrine and the responsibilities of the

DIRMOBFOR. Hopefully, the following discussion on similarities and differences in the functional roles of the COMALF and the DIRMOBFOR will assist doctrine writers and their influence on air mobility leadership.

Notes

¹ Robert Debs Heine, Jr., *Dictionary of Military and Naval Quotations* (Annapolis, MD: United States Naval Institute, 1966), 355.

² Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 1, *Air Force Basic Doctrine*, September 1997, 83.

³ U.S. Department of Defense, "Joint Statement on the Kosovo After Action Review," DefenseLINK, 14 October 1999, n.p.; on-line, Internet, 8 March 2000, available from http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Oct1999/b10141999_bt478-99.html

⁴ *National Security Strategy For A New Century*, (White House, 1999), 18.

⁵ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *National Military Strategy of the United States of America, Shape, Respond, Prepare Now: A Military Strategy for a New Era*, 1997, 2-3.

⁶ AFDD 1, 7.

⁷ Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 2, *Organization and Employment of Aerospace Power*, 28 September 1998, v.

⁸ Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 2-6, *Air Mobility Operations*, 25 June 1999, vii.

⁹ Ibid., 20.

¹⁰ Lt Gen Edwin E. Tenoso (Ret), Lockheed Martin Aeronautical Systems, interviewed by author, 25 February 2000.

¹¹ Brig Gen Rod Bishop, Operation ALLIED FORCE Director of Mobility Forces, interviewed by author, 9 February 2000.

¹² Major Peter Hirneise, Operation ALLIED FORCE Director of Mobility Forces Action Officer, interviewed by author, 4 February 2000.

¹³ Lt Gen Hal Hornburg, "The Roles/Relationships of The JFACC & COMMAFFOR," lecture, Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, AL, 14 February 2000.

¹⁴ AFDD 2-6, 20-21.

¹⁵ Tenoso.

Part 4

Air Mobility Leadership

An army cannot be administered. It must be lead.

— Franz-Joseph Strauss

As discussed earlier, the Military Airlift Command became the Air Mobility Command and assumed the air refueling role in addition to its traditional airlift role in 1992. Basically, AMC's responsibility expanded and became what is generally considered a "mobility" role versus a pure "airlift" role. This new change in air mobility's role and organizational structuring eliminated the position of a theater air mobility commander, or COMALF equivalent. In response, the air staff convened a meeting to discuss the new role for theater air mobility leadership to replace the COMALF. Because the theater leadership role had changed to that of a "director or coordinator" versus a commander, and airlift and air refueling merged to form a new "mobility" role, the air staff developed the DIRMOBFOR as the title for the new theater air mobility leadership.¹

During contingency operations, the JFC organizes forces to accomplish a specific mission. In organizing the forces, the JFC will normally designate someone to have hands-on control of the air mobility forces. These air mobility forces consist of strategic and theater airlift, air refueling, operational support airlift, and aeromedical evacuation. Because of the United States Transportation Command's (USTRANSCOM) and AMC's global commitments to provide air mobility forces, the person selected as the DIRMOBFOR must coordinate and integrate the theater air mobility requirements with the global commitments. In doing so, this person must

provide the JFC with enough theater air mobility forces to allow "...rapid and flexible options allowing military forces to respond to, and operate in, a wider variety of circumstances and time frames."²

What type of air mobility leadership can best meet this need, and should the leadership role be that of a director or a commander? Table 1 compares how the COMALF and the DIRMOBFOR positions meet the requirements for eight leadership functions. Figure 1 shows the organizational structure of the COMALF prior to the restructuring of 1992, and Figure 2 shows the organizational structure after 1992 and where the DIRMOBFOR fits in.

Table 1. COMALF and DIRMOBFOR Leadership Assessment

COMALF and DIRMOBFOR Leadership Assessment		
Function	COMALF	DIRMOBFOR
Command & Control	C2 delegated to COMALF from JFC through Air Component Commander (JFACC)	<i>Reports to the Air Component Commander (JFACC)</i>
Authority	C2 of all assigned theater airlift forces	None
Command Relationship	OPCON/TACON	None
Working Location	Tactical Air Control Center (Today's AOC)	AOC
Intertheater Airlift	Coordinated with AMC/CC	Coordinated with AMC/CC
Selection Process	Nominated by NAF Designated by AMC/CC Approval by theater CINC	Sourced by Air Force Component commander OR Nominated by AMC/CC
Rank	Brig Gen	Lieutenant Colonel or Colonel

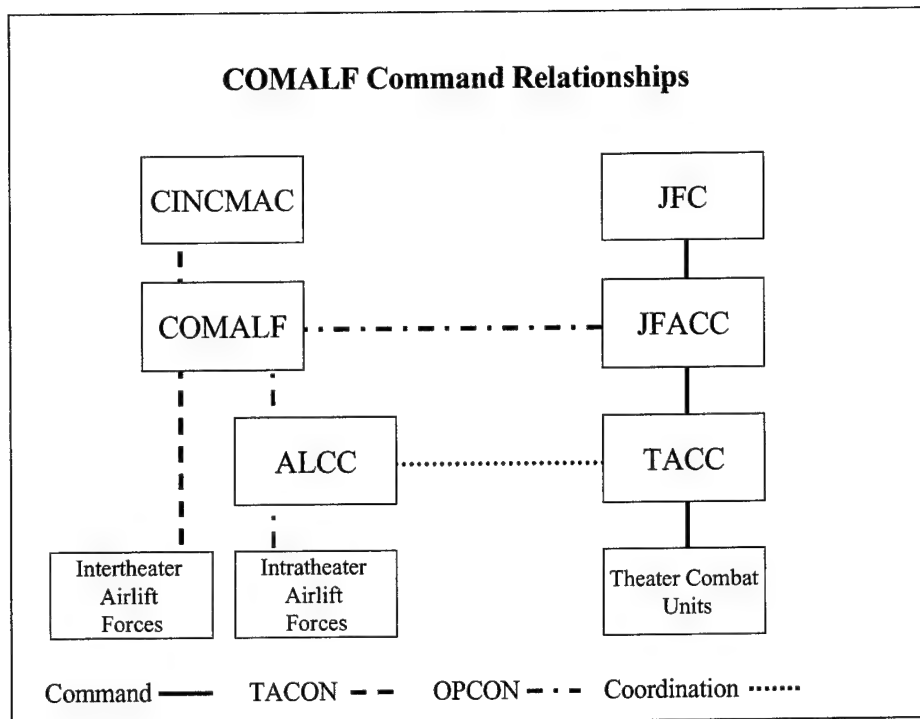


Figure 1. COMALF Command Relations.³

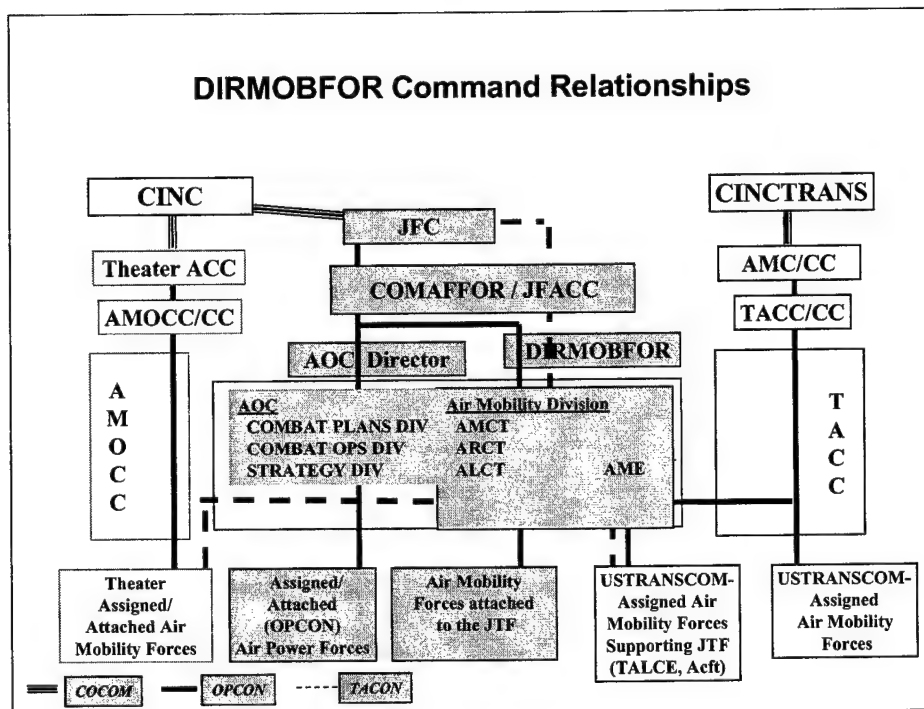


Figure 2. DIRMOBFOR Command Relations.⁴

Prior to 1992, the theater airlift leadership role was performed by a commander, the COMALF, as shown in Figure 1. The COMALF position was developed during the Vietnam War, and tested and proven during the Gulf War. In 1992, the COMALF role was replaced by a director, the DIRMOBFOR, as shown in Figure 2. The DIRMOBFOR is very much like the COMALF in that he still coordinates with AMC while supervising strategic forces and reports to the JFACC.⁵ When comparing the basic leadership roles of the COMALF and the DIRMOBFOR, there are some similarities, but there are some big differences.

The Director versus the Commander

The biggest difference is that the DIRMOBFOR now only has "coordinating authority."⁶ Although responsible for the theater air mobility forces, the DIRMOBFOR is not automatically given C2 authority over these forces like a COMALF.⁷ For example, Brig Gen Bishop was the DIRMOBFOR in October 1998 when an airlift request was made to support a U-2 mission. As a coordinator and not a commander, Brig Gen Bishop had to coordinate with multiple commands and organizations to get the authority to validate the mission and alert the aircrew to support the mission. As Figure 3 and Figure 4 indicate, Brig Gen Bishop made 19 phone calls, starting with the United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) Crisis Action Team (CAT), to request validation to support the mission. The request went from the USAFE CAT to European Command (EUCOM) operations and USTRANSCOM before being approved by the Tanker Airlift Control Center (TACC) at AMC. Once the validation was received, Brig Gen Bishop directed the Air Mobility Control Center (AMCC) to alert the aircrew. As a result, the mission was delayed 4 hours, new slot times were required to enter another nation's airspace, and new landing times had to be approved at the destination. Also as a result, the user was dissatisfied and the host nation did not like the numerous changes they had to make to support the mission.

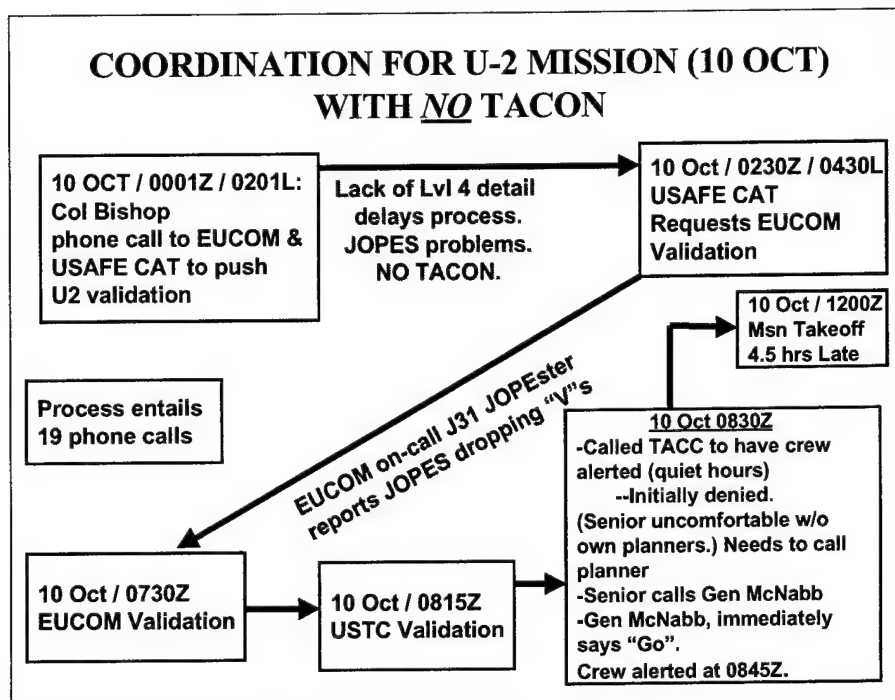


Figure 3. Coordination Flow for U-2 Mission Validation.

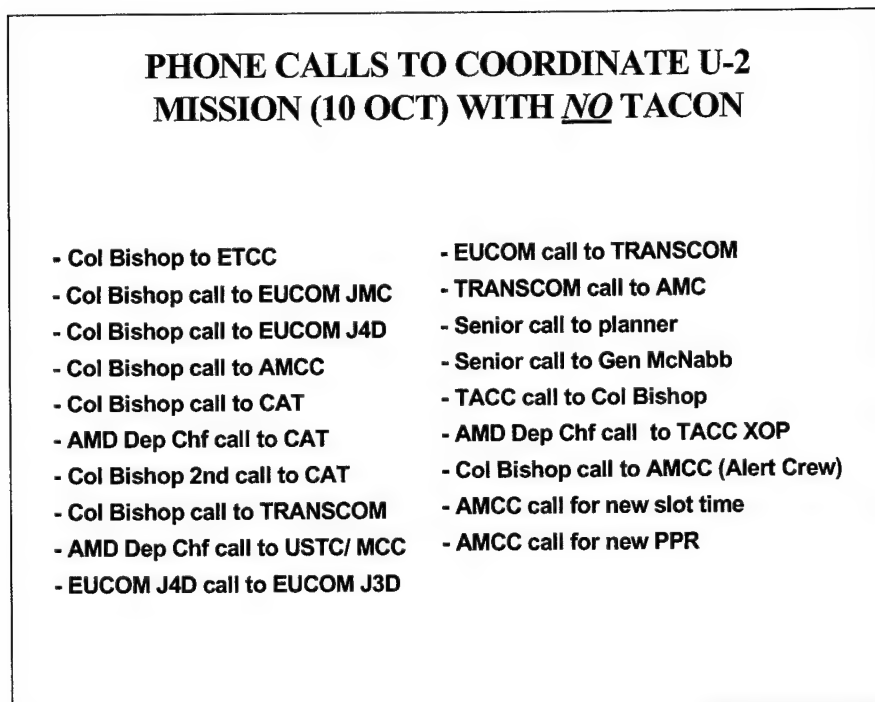


Figure 4. Coordination Phone Calls Required for U-2 Mission Validation.⁸

As a commander with command authority (OPCON/TACON), the DIRMOBFOR could have taken care of the request with two phone calls the first call to EUCOM to get verbal validation, and the second call to the AMCC directing they alert the aircrew.⁹

According to current joint publications and Air Force doctrine, once a contingency develops, the theater CINC may select a DIRMOBFOR from within the theater or request one from AMC to direct airlift and air refueling operations. Technically, only commanders can exercise control (OPCON/TACON) of forces. Therefore, OPCON/TACON is retained by the JFACC instead of the DIRMOBFOR because "...the DIRMOBFOR can only exercise TACON, or OPCON over the air mobility forces when it is delegated by the JFACC."¹⁰ Thus, the centralized command of theater air mobility forces is pushed up the chain of command to the air component commander or JFACC. According to AFM 2-50, the COMALF is different from the DIRMOBFOR in that the COMALF was "...nominated by the appropriate AMC NAF, designated by the AMC commander, and approved by the theater combatant commander to exercise operational control (OPCON) of the airlift forces assigned to a theater or area of responsibility (AOR)."¹¹ Although still under command of the JFACC, the COMALF had a true centralized control of all theater airlift forces.¹²

Along with the reduction in C2 authority is an increase in responsibilities for the DIRMOBFOR. The increase in responsibility for the DIRMOBFOR comes from coordinating both the airlift *and* air refueling forces, while the COMALF was only concerned with airlift forces. There is also a grade difference between the two positions. The COMALF during the Gulf War was a brigadier general in command of airlift forces only. The DIRMOBFOR of today, depending on the intensity of the conflict, can be a Colonel or a Lieutenant Colonel,¹³ coordinating both airlift and air refueling forces. According to Brig Gen Bishop, the

DIRMOBFOR's job would be made significantly easier if he or she was a pinned on brigadier general. He stated "Through five deployments as a Brig Gen (S), I have had to time and again (we have supported a total of ten different joint task forces/task forces) establish credibility and fight to get a seat at the (JFACC's) table."¹⁴ Members of Brig Gen Bishop's DIRMOBFOR staff during Operation ALLIED FORCE saw first-hand how this reduction in rank put mobility efforts at risk. According to Major Jack Burns, if the DIRMOBFOR cannot get a seat at the "commander's table," how do mobility issues get elevated?¹⁵ As demonstrated during the Gulf War, it was difficult enough to gather the needed support mechanisms for airlift operations **with a COMALF**. How much harder will it be to get things implemented in the next MTW with a field grade officer in place of a flag officer?¹⁶

Leadership Assessment

With the introduction of the DIRMOBFOR, centralized C2 of theater air mobility forces was taken from an airlift expert in the COMALF and given to the JFACC. While JFACCs are certainly air-minded individuals, they usually lack significant airlift experience. In addition, JFACCs are primarily interested in conducting the air war as opposed to concerning themselves with airlift or air refueling. What currently happens between the JFACC and the DIRMOBFOR during a conflict is the JFACC delegates responsibility of all theater air mobility forces to the DIRMOBFOR. Lt Gen Tenoso gives the example of when he became the Gulf War COMALF. In his conversation with General Horner, General Horner said "Tenoso, I don't know anything about airlift. You take your airlift and if you need anything from me, you let me know. I'm too busy fighting the air war."¹⁷ Major Pete Hirneise related that the same type of incident occurred when Brig Gen Bishop showed up in theater. "General Jumper told Colonel Bishop to take the airlift issues off his plate. He was more concerned about fighting the air war."¹⁸ So in essence,

what had happened was that the commander responsibility was taken away from the COMALF, and left to the JFACC. Then, responsibility minus command was delegated back down to the DIRMOBFOR in the role of coordinator/director. That leads one to ask why control of airlift and air refueling forces was turned over directly to the JFACC so he could give it back to a "coordinator?"

There are three lessons to be learned in comparing the roles of the DIRMOBFOR and the COMALF, particularly with respect to Operation ALLIED FORCE. First, future conflicts may again be fought with air power alone. Second, if this happens, the JFACC will be busy fighting the air war and will have little or no interest in air mobility operations. Third, since air component commanders are generally not airlift experts, they will need someone, preferably a commander, to be their expert and advisor on air mobility. These lessons suggest there should be a mobility expert with C2 authority (i.e., OPCON/TACON) delegated from AMC for strategic air mobility operations, and/or from the JFACC to control theater air mobility operations. As Lt Gen Tenoso said of the COMALF "The (COMALF) position worked great!"¹⁹

This part of this paper compared the functional roles performed by the COMALF and the DIRMOBFOR. There are certainly some similarities, but there is one big difference. The COMALF, a commander, exercised OPCON and TACON over strategic and theater airlift forces. The DIRMOBFOR, a coordinator, lacks the ability to execute air mobility missions in an efficient and effective manner. The answer to the DIRMOBFOR dilemma rest in a combination of the COMALF and the DIRMOBFOR. Perhaps the true role for theater air mobility leadership is a Commander of Mobility Forces (COMMOBFOR.)

Notes

¹ Lt Gen Edwin E. Tenoso (Ret), Lockheed Martin Aeronautical Systems, interviewed by author, 25 February 2000.

Notes

² Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 1, *Air Force Basic Doctrine*, September 1997, 54.

³ Major Gregory M. Chase, *Wings for Lift: A Guide to Theater Airlift Control*, Research Report no. M-U 43122 C487w (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, April, 1985), 15; Major John C. (Red) Millander, *Improving C2 of Strategic Airlift Forces in Contingencies*, Research Report no. M-U 41662 M645i (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 13 June 1997), 4.

⁴ *Director of Mobility Forces "DIRMOBFOR" Handbook* (Ft Dix, NJ: Air Mobility Command, Air Mobility Warfare Center, 9th Ed, September 1998), 25

⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁶ Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 2-6, *Air Mobility Operations*, 25 June 1999, 20.

⁷ Chase, 11.

⁸ Developed by Brig Gen Bishop's DIRMOBFOR Action Officers.

⁹ Major Peter Hirneise, Operation ALLIED FORCE Director of Mobility Forces Action Officer, interviewed by author, 4 February 2000.

¹⁰ Brig Gen Rod Bishop, Operation ALLIED FORCE Director of Mobility Forces, interviewed by author, 9 February 2000.

¹¹ Air Force Manual (AFM) 2-50, *Multi-Service Doctrine for Air Movement Operations*, April 1992, 2:6.

¹² Lt Col Richard T. Devereaux, *Theater Airlift Management and Control—Should We Turn back The Clock to be Ready for Tomorrow?*, (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, School of Advanced Airpower Studies Thesis, September 1994), 38.

¹³ Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 2, *Organization and Employment of Aerospace Power*, 28 September 1998, 33

¹⁴ Bishop.

¹⁵ Major John P. Burns, Operation ALLIED FORCE Director of Mobility Forces Action Officer, interviewed by author, 8 February 2000.

¹⁶ Millander, 10.

¹⁷ Tenoso.

¹⁸ Hirneise.

¹⁹ Tenoso.

Part 4

The True Role for Theater Air Mobility Leadership

The success of my whole project is founded on the firmness of the conduct of the officer who will command it.

— Frederick the Great

Air mobility forces need centralized C2 regarding theater air mobility operations rather than C2 being delegated by the JFACC on an as needed basis. The DIRMOBFOR must report to and coordinate with a lot of commands and organizations such as USTRANSCOM, AMC, TACC, USAFE, EUCOM, TF Commanders, etc. Understandably, it can be very frustrating for the DIRMOBFOR to do so much coordinating just to execute a single mission. Eventually, this lack of authority will again affect the mission as it did in the previously mentioned U2 support mission that ended in 19 phone calls, a late take off, and a disgruntled user. It could have taken two phone calls. The person who can fix this is the old COMALF. However, to meet the needs of the combined airlift and air refueling "mobility" mission, the role should become that of a Commander of Mobility Forces or COMMOBFOR. This part of this paper proposes one possible way to implement the COMMOBFOR.

This idea is not original to this paper. In Brig Gen Bishop's after action report for Operation ALLIED FORCE, he recommended the DIRMOBFOR role change to that of a COMMOBFOR. His observation and recommendation was,

"During contingency and air power employment CFACC/JFACC does not have the time to exercise TACON of strategic airlift assets. Additionally, command

interrelationships were such that airlift's major task—the deployment of TASK FORCE HAWK—did not come under the purview of the CFACC/JFACC (during the deployment phase HAWK had no formal command relationship to the JTF.) Create a Commander of Mobility Forces (COMMOBFOR) or Commander of Air Mobility Forces (COMAMOBFOR) position. The position would work directly for the JFACC/theater air component commander and would be responsible for all air mobility movements. TACON could then be transferred for specific missions on an up front agreed-upon basis by CINCTrans/Commander of AMC”¹

The point Brig Gen Bishop is trying to make is that if the DIRMOBFOR were a commander, the JFACC could then delegate OPCON or TACON to the COMMOBFOR and not have to worry about exercising C2 for air mobility forces that are part of the JFACC's focus during a contingency. The COMMOBFOR could set up C2 of mobility forces to best meet the needs of the JTFs and the AOC and could exercise command authority and raise mobility issues to higher levels for action.

The point of having a commander for air mobility forces is important for other reasons as well. According to Lt Gen Tenoso “The DIRMOBFOR needs to be a commander because if you (sic) get into a MTW like Desert Storm, the AFFOR will want a commander who has command responsibility for care, feeding, safety, etc. He will not want a director, he will want a commander.” As previously mentioned, Gen Horner told Lt Gen Tenoso “You take your airlift and if you need anything from me, you let me know. I'm too busy fighting the air war,”² and Gen Jumper told Brig Gen Bishop to “...take the airlift issues off his plate” because he was more concerned about fighting the air war.”³

Implementation of the COMMOBFOR

Using Table 1 as one example of the benefits of a robust commander versus a weak director, the implementation of a COMMOBFOR would begin with the JFC delegating C2 (OPCON/TACON) of all theater air mobility forces through the air component commander

(JFACC) to the COMMOBFOR. In addition, the COMMOBFOR would have the ability to supervise transient strategic air mobility missions that operate into and out of the theater. TACON passed by the USTRANSCOM and AMC would pass directly to the COMMOBFOR, allowing a smooth transfer of control and placing the authority at the level of responsibility. This would expeditiously and efficiently allow coordination through USTRANSCOM and AMC to have strategic airlift forces and additional air refueling forces augment the forces already in theater.

Under current doctrine, the DIRMOBFOR is supposed to be a Colonel or Lieutenant Colonel. How can the DIRMOBFOR get the respect needed if his equivalent, the AOC Director who handles the fighting forces under command of the JFACC, is a brigadier general? As a Brig Gen, the COMMOBFOR would be on the same level as the AOC Director. The rank would greatly facilitate coordination with the general/flag JTF commanders and multinational forces as well.

A COMMOBFOR would also give air mobility troops someone to put their eyes on and say, "That is our commander. He is the one looking out for our needs both while flying and not flying." He will also take care of the mobility ground support troops living in the field. The esprit de corps gained by having an air mobility commander in theater should not be underestimated.

Deputy COMMOBFOR

To assist the COMMOBFOR with air refueling and other separate JTF issues, there should also be a Deputy COMMOBFOR. As previously mentioned, during Operation DESERT STORM, then Brig Gen Tenoso commanded the airlift forces and Brig Gen Caruana commanded the air refueling forces because both were full time jobs. The COMMOBFOR should have the

ability to call on multiple deputies as needed to accomplish each mission or assigned task. Other personnel can be brought in from CONUS to act as deputy COMMOBFORs to support and assist the COMMOBFOR during deployment, employment, sustainment, and redeployment of combat forces.

Using Operation ALLIED FORCE as an example, Brig Gen Bishop had several deputies working different JTFs and issues for him. Colonel Martuano worked Task Force (TF) SHINING HOPE, Colonel Gallion worked operational support airlift and C-130 issues. Colonel Stickford handled tanker operations within the AOC, and Colonel Maul worked airlift issues in the AOC.⁴ All of these O-6s would fall under the command of the COMMOBFOR for centralized command and control.

The biggest requirement for a deputy concerns air refueling operations within the AOC. This deputy should have an extensive background in air refueling operations and would be of great assistance in the AOC coordinating AOR tanker support during a conflict. The Air Force should also reevaluate AFDD 2-6.2 *Air Refueling Operations*, and publish doctrine that is flexible enough to meet varying organizational constructs and different mission focus for tanker operations. For example, during the initial deployment of combat forces for a given operation, AMC will provide tankers to the supported CINC through the COMMOBFOR. During contingencies that involve a large combat air campaign, a Deputy COMMOBFOR for tanker operations can represent and work for the COMMOBFOR during the deployment phase of the operation within the AOC. When the tanker operations shift to support combat operations, and when specified by the JFACC, the Deputy COMMOBFOR for tanker operations could assist the AOC combat planners, and the JFACC, in planning tanker operations to support the fighters in the AOR. The deputy would maintain a link with the COMMOBFOR in case there is a need for

theater tanker support for airlift or other supported functions through the AMD. When fighting ceases, and when specified by the JFACC, the Deputy COMMOBFOR would assist the COMMOBFOR with redeployment operations, while maintaining a link with the AOC director for continued support of AOC-planned missions. This scenario existed ad hoc during Operation ALLIED FORCE, as Colonel Stickford was dispatched to the AOC to work tanker support for the fighters and tanker bed down issues.⁵

A Natural Choice for COMMOBFOR--The AMOCC Commander

Today, in place of the Air Divisions that existed prior to the 1992 reorganization, there are two Air Mobility Operations Control Centers (AMOCC). One is located at Ramstein AB, Germany, and the other is at Hickam AFB, Hawaii. The AMOCC is the "...theater's single command and control layer for theater air mobility operations external to a JTF."⁶ As mentioned earlier, the AMOCC does not work for the JFC, but it does work for the theater commander. In that role, the AMOCC "...provides centralized planning, tasking, scheduling, coordination, and C2 for assigned and attached theater airlift and air refueling forces operating in the geographic CINC's AOR." What is also important is the fact that the AMOCC handles both strategic and theater missions for a seamless operation, and validates user requirements and force allocations. They also have C2 teams that are deployable to austere locations.⁷ The AMOCC commander handles all strategic and theater mobility operations *external* to the JFC, yet the AMOCC commander is the most experienced mobility expert in the theater. The AMOCC commander already has a control center, tanker planners, and airlift planners controlling theater air mobility operations. Why then is the AMOCC limited to operations that are only external to the JFC? If the 615th and 621st Air Mobility Operations Groups (AMOG) were to downsize and combine with the AMOCC, the AMOCC commander would have a very robust control center, much like

the old 322nd and 834th Air Divisions. Again, this setup actually occurred during Operation ALLIED FORCE. According to Brig Gen Bishop, "...the leadership actually recognized the AMOCC as the old 322nd Air Division by another name, and under the command of USAFE and not AMC." He continued by saying "There were a lot of pros that knew what they were doing when the AMD (AMOG personnel) and the AMOCC were combined...."⁸ By default, as the theater mobility expert with a robust command and control organization, the AMOCC commander would be a good candidate for the COMMOBFOR responsibilities for the theater.

The COMMOBFOR will bring back the centralized C2 for theater air mobility forces providing the effective and efficient utilization of theater air mobility assets through OPCON and TACON of strategic and theater air mobility forces. With a centralized command authority established by the COMMOBFOR, deputy COMMOBFORs will act as the air mobility expert to oversee JTFs or other operations yet remain under the command authority of the COMMOBFOR providing air mobility to support anything, anywhere, anytime.

Notes

¹ Brig Gen Rod Bishop, Director of Mobility Forces (DIRMOBFOR) for EUCOM Lessons Learned, Joint Task Force NOBLE ANVIL, 23 March 99 through 7 Jul 99.

² Lt Gen Edwin E. Tenoso (Ret), Lockheed Martin Aeronautical Systems, interviewed by author, 25 February 2000.

³ Major Peter Hirneise, 437th Airlift Wing Executive Officer, interviewed by author, 4 February 2000.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 2-6, *Air Mobility Operations*, 25 June 1999, 17.

⁷ Ibid., 17.

⁸ Bishop.

Part 5

Conclusion

You may be whatever you resolve to be.

— Lt Gen Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson

Lt Gen Edwin Tenoso, who served as the COMALF during Operation DESERT STORM, and Brig Gen Rod Bishop, who has served as the DIRMOBFOR for 10 contingencies, most recently during Operation ALLIED FORCE, have had a chance to test the COMALF and the DIRMOBFOR positions against the elements of conflict. To this very day, they both agree on one issue: the theater air mobility infrastructure must bring back the badly needed support of a commander. The JFACC, who is not an air mobility expert, and the theater air mobility forces need a commander to control assigned and attached forces along with supervising the strategic forces that transit the theater. As a commander, the COMMOBFOR can support the theater CINC to meet any and all assigned tasks and objectives, whether those tasks and objectives include seven concurrent JTFs or a major air war. The COMMOBFOR would do this throughout the deployment, employment, sustainment, and redeployment phases of an operation.

To carry-out these responsibilities, the COMMOBFOR must be a brigadier general in order to place the COMMOBFOR position on the same level as the AOC director and other flag officers. By utilizing multiple deputy COMMOBFORs as needed to meet desired objectives and end states, the COMMOBFOR will provide a centralized command and control for theater as well as JTF operations by directing operations from a central location if required. The best

location is the theater AMOCC because of theater expertise and the capability for centralized planning, tasking, scheduling, coordination, and command and control for air mobility forces. Because of this, the best person for the COMMOBFOR job is the AMOCC commander. During peacetime operations, the AMOCC commander manages strategic and theater air mobility assets. When a contingency arises, the AMOCC will continue to operate as normal but will now bring into focus the JFC's air mobility issues. This would also be keeping in line with AFDD 2-6 to "...establish standards that enable a smooth transition to contingency operations."¹ Overall centralized command and control of air power must come from the air component commander, but nothing prevents centralized command and control of rapid global mobility and the air mobility forces in the COMMOBFOR.

Additionally, Air Force and air mobility doctrine writers should reassess air mobility doctrine and the responsibilities and role of the DIRMObFOR leadership, especially in light of MOOTW and As stated before, Lt Gen Tenoso and Brig Gen Bishop are the only two people with experience as a COMALF during a MTW and a DIRMObFOR during a large scale contingency. They both agree that the air mobility infrastructure needs a commander. The single most valuable role of the COMMOBFOR will be command authority and centralized C2. Because of this, air mobility will be able to provide forces in a more effective and efficient manner to execute the future MOOTW and multiple JTF operations anticipated by the national strategy and joint publications.

Notes

¹ Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 2-6, *Air Mobility Operations*, 25 June 1999, 15.

Glossary

ACC	Air Component Commander
AFDD	Air Force Doctrine Document
AMC	Air Mobility Command
AMCC	Air Mobility Control Center
AMD	Air Mobility Division
AMOCC	Air Mobility Operations Control Center
AMOG	Air Mobility Operations Group
AOC	Air Operations Center
AOR	Area of Responsibility
ATC	Air Transportation Command
C2	Command and Control
CINC	Commander in Chief
COMAFFOR	Commander of Air Force Forces
COMALF	Commander of Airlift Forces
COMMOBFOR	Commander of Mobility Forces
CONUS	Continental United States
DIRMOBFOR	Director of Mobility Forces
EUCOM	European Command
JFACC	Joint Force Air Component Commander
JFC	Joint Force Commander
JTF	Joint Task Force
MAC	Military Airlift Command
MATS	Military Air Transport Service
MOOTW	Military Operations Other Than War
MTW	Major Theater War
NAF	Numbered Air Force
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OPCON	Operational Control
PACAF	Pacific Air Forces

SEC DEF

Secretary of Defense

TACC

Tanker Airlift Control Center

TACON

Tactical Control

TF

Task Force

USAFE

United States Air Forces in Europe

USTRANSCOM

United States Transportation Command

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